



In Transit January/February 2014

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



*From the General
Manager's desk*

Great job in 2013!

I'd like to start the new year by celebrating our many accomplishments in 2013. We gave our customers and King County taxpayers high value and much-appreciated services.

We enhanced customer information tools and began work on a low-income fare program; increased the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of our operations and business practices; launched pedestrian awareness safety initiatives; reduced on-the-job injuries; and pursued several process-improvement projects.

Internally, we launched the management-labor Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE); upgraded a number of our customer and operating facilities; opened a new garage at the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride; and awarded a contract for new trolley buses.

This list only scratches the surface, and—despite diminished funding—we continued to grow our ridership. Preliminary 2013 numbers indicate that we came within 0.3 percent of our 2008 record, missing by the equivalent of one weekday's ridership despite the end of the ride free area. This shows that King County is recovering and growing, which means we need to grow, too.

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We'll Get You There



This mural in the 10200 block of Aurora Avenue N seems to be welcoming the E Line, which begins service along the corridor on Feb. 15.

E Line begins on Aurora

The fifth RapidRide line is set to begin service between downtown Seattle and the Aurora Village Transit Center on Feb. 15.

As construction of passenger amenities at E Line stops and stations wound down, Metro's Marketing and Service Information group began work on customer information pieces, including bus timetables and schedule information, bus interior and exterior signs, rider education materials about RapidRide's fare payment and proof of payment systems, and marketing materials to let people know about the new features the E Line will provide along its corridor.

The E Line will replace Route 358, which carries about 12,000 riders each weekday. We expect ridership to grow after the E Line begins, partly because the E Line will provide more service: mid-day service every 12 minutes instead of every 15 minutes, and service every 15 minutes until 10 p.m.

The sixth (and last planned) RapidRide line, the F Line, is scheduled to start running between Burien and Renton in June. All told,

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Coming our way: a changing of the guard

America's workforce is aging across all industries, but even more so in government. The current median age of Metro employees is 52.

Metro established its new Workforce Development Program to prepare the next generation of leaders and skilled staff members. **Jonathan Halperin**, the program's manager, said it takes significant work and resources to build a "bench" of qualified employees who are ready to step into vacated positions—and we can't do it overnight.



Sharon Slebodnick, back row, second from right, stands with several members of her Transit Route Facilities group. Front row (L-R): **Steve Cahan**, **Joyce McEwen**, **David Korthals**, **Paul Roybal**, **Dan Wells**, **Jay Vavra**. Back row (L-R): **David Cantey**, **Verita Alexander**, **Liz Gotterer**, **Slebodnick**, **Drew Robinson**. Not pictured: **Mary Bemowski**, **Dale Cummings**, **Colin Drake**, **Franco Fernandes**, **Rose McCracken**

"As leaders, we have a responsibility to ensure a transition that's minimally disruptive for our staff and their work," said **Sharon Slebodnick**, a supervisor in Service Development who has dealt with several retirements in her group and has more on the way. "This demonstrates respect for the remaining team members, our customers, the people we partner with, and Metro as a whole."

When employees retire after 25 or 30 years of service, there's a risk of losing a huge amount of information and know-how, and deep working relationships that have been fostered over many years, Slebodnick said. Maintaining an open and trusting relationship with your staff is key to getting an opportunity to transfer those assets.

"Staff members need to feel safe and willing to share their future plans with you," she said. "I make it a habit to ask my employees, especially as they near retirement age, 'What kind of legacy do you want to leave? What are top goals you want to achieve before you end your career with Metro, and how can I best support you?'"

Slebodnick said she also promotes the idea that each employee is unique and carries a huge store of experiences, talents, insights, and skills "that we want to carefully and respectfully hand off, for the benefit of the team and the work we do."

Halperin said the first step in protecting a group's institutional knowledge is to identify the biggest risk areas, where expert employees have unique skills and

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General Manager

This time last year, we were staring at a "fiscal cliff" without new, sustainable funding. The state Legislature has not yet provided a solution to replace expiring and/or diminished revenues, so we now stand at the edge of that cliff. Despite all we've done to control costs, increase fares, and build a more productive system, we face the possibility of making deep service cuts instead of growing.

We would prefer a balanced statewide transportation package with local options for funding Metro, but with the Legislature's transportation funding effort stalled, King County Executive **Dow Constantine** announced on Jan. 14 a proposal to avoid significant cuts in Metro services. He asked the County Council to take swift action to form a countywide transportation benefit district, as allowed under current state law, and put a funding proposal to a public vote—possibly as soon as April.

The proposal would generate about \$130 million per year from two sources: a \$60 annual vehicle fee and a sales tax increase of one-tenth of a cent.

Sixty percent of these funds (a projected \$80 million in 2015) would go to Metro for transit service. That's enough to maintain our current service level. The rest would go to road projects.

The Executive's proposal also includes a fare ordinance with a 25-cent increase for regular fares, a 50-cent increase for Access fares, and a new low-income fare. If this is adopted, we'll become one of only a few transit agencies in the country that offer a low-income fare, and launching this new program by March 2015 will become one of our major initiatives this year.

Of course we can't afford to rest on our laurels. We're setting new priorities for 2014, and chief among them will be securing sustainable funding. With it, we can focus on meeting our customers' needs. Without it, we must focus on downsizing our system. But we'll have other important initiatives as well—watch for our "Top 10" list in the next issue.

— **Kevin Desmond**
General Manager



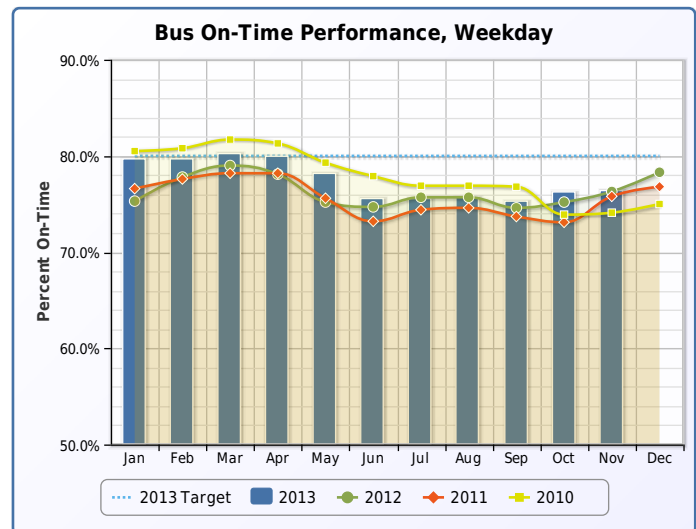
It's all about accountability and performance

In this space, we usually focus on a single topic that measures how well Metro is delivering service to the public. But that only scratches the surface of what's available. Our Online Accountability Center has detailed information (updated monthly) on dozens of measures of ridership, safety and security, service quality, and finances—and it's available to our employees and staff members as well as the general public.

The website also includes annual statistics and reports that cover even more measures. In the Annual Customer Service section, for example, we show how our online customer contacts have grown tremendously over the past several years, and a peer comparison with 29 of the largest bus agencies in the U.S. shows that we have the tenth highest annual bus boardings.

At right is an example of one of the monthly charts, showing one of our measures of service reliability. Our goal is for our buses to be between one minute early and five minutes late at our bus stops at least 80 percent of the time.

Our on-time rate tends to go down every summer, but since 2012 we've been steadily improving overall. And our on-time



performance in October and November 2013 was the best it's been in those months since before 2010. Still, we're not meeting our 80-percent target—yet.

For (much) more information, see the Accountability Center at <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/am/accountability/>.

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Coming our way: a changing of the guard

knowledge. Leaders need to fully understand *what* these experts do, *how* they do it, and *who* they work with most closely:

- What are the key steps in their work processes? What's the best way to document those steps?
- How do they get results? What behaviors, styles, and approaches seem to work best?
- Who are their key contacts, their critical work relationships, their internal and external stakeholders?

Slebodnick said it helps to think of retirements and other departures “as opportunities for more junior staff members to develop and grow, for you as a leader to potentially reorganize your team, and perhaps to bring in new talent with a fresh perspective.” We'll all be facing this common challenge in the coming years, she added, “and believe me, it really pays off to start planning early.”

Halperin has put together a list of options for transferring institutional knowledge; you can read it on Metro's Workforce Development website at <http://1.usa.gov/1fPRbB3>.

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E Line begins on Aurora



David Lantry, Susan Rudolph-Loos, and Deborah Brockway show some of the materials their group produced for the launch of the RapidRide E Line.

the RapidRide program has received more than \$120 million in federal and state grants, offsetting more than half the cost of its new buses and passenger amenities.

RapidRide has shown itself to be an effective way to attract riders and increase customer satisfaction with public transportation. The A and C lines both exceeded their five-year goals of increasing ridership by 50 percent, in less than two years—and ridership on the B and D lines has grown by 20 percent.

KUDOS

IN TRANSIT

■ **Cannon named first-line supervisor of shake-up**—*In Transit* apologizes for this belated recognition:

Julia Cannon was named First-line Supervisor of the Shake-up for Fall 2012. Cannon became a first-line supervisor in 1991 and currently serves as the a.m. dispatcher at North Base. Her team calls her a great role model, especially to North Base operators and to the supervisors-in-training staff assigned to her. They say she demonstrates positive leadership, consistency, reliability, and commitment to Metro's mission and values; brings professionalism to her position; and does not hesitate to take the lead when necessary.

■ **Metropool team honored**—Metro's Metropool program—the nation's first all-electric vanpool program—received the 2013 Alternative Fuels Spirit Award from the Western Washington Clean Cities Coalition on Dec. 5.

Syd Pawlowski, Daphne Dilley, and Cindy Hudson accepted the award on behalf of the many individuals and groups who contribute to Rideshare Operations, including staff members from Metro, King County's Fleet Administration Division, and the Department of Transportation.



Hudson, Dilley, and Pawlowski with Alternative Fuels Spirit Award plaques.



Julia Cannon

■ **Stockman honored for energy savings**—The King County Employee Energy Program recognized **Bill Stockman**, superintendent of Power Distribution, as an "Energy Hero" in its Fall 2013 newsletter. Conservation is a daily practice for Stockman and those he supervises, the article said. Their primary focus is on Metro's Electric Trolley bus system and infrastructure, and they also maintain the electrical and communication systems in Transit-owned buildings and passenger facilities. By constantly looking for ways to apply energy-efficient methods and products, his team has saved about 1.5 million kWh of electricity per year – worth more than \$105,000. They've also captured some \$300,000 in utility incentive rebates over the past two years. Read the article online at <http://bit.ly/1msMAou> (county computers only).



Bill Stockman, Energy Hero

■ **Operator helps return stolen bike**—After Beth Gunn's bicycle was stolen, she was astonished to see it heading toward her on the street—in the bike rack on the front of a D-Line bus. She stopped the bus and told the driver that her stolen bike was in his rack. That driver was **Matt Leber** (AKA VeloBusDriver), a fellow bike commuter and bike-transit blogger. While they spoke, a couple of passengers left the bus through the rear doors. When Leber asked the remaining passengers who owned the bike on the front of the bus, no one answered. After Gunn provided a copy of her police report and a photo of her bike, a Metro supervisor allowed her to claim her property. For the full story of this happy reunion, see the Seattle Bike Blog (<http://bit.ly/1mq6KzH>).



Beth Gunn, left, celebrates the return of her stolen bike with Matt Leber (photo courtesy of Seattle Bike Blog).

Send questions, comments, or story ideas to *In Transit*, KSC-TR-0824, or contact the editor, Anna Clemenger, at 206-477-3839 or anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov. Transit coordinator: Bob Simpson. Staff photographer: Ned Ahrens.

Service awards

The following employees achieved major service milestones in the first quarter of 2014:



Link – **James Gorham.**

Vehicle Maintenance – **Carl Inman, Ragnar Kristjansson, Fred Zingleman.**



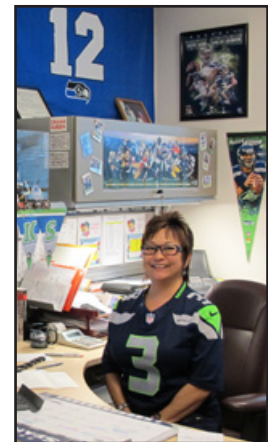
Power and Facilities – **Donald Aylesworth, Birdie Marciel.** Transit Operations – **Charles Ahrenius, Ray Campbell, Oleg Gielman, Charles La Croix, Edward Leung, Carey Watson.** Vehicle Maintenance – **James Jakeman, Robert Martinsen, Richard Minyard, Kurt Sutphin.**



Loud and proud— Metro shows 12th Man spirit



When the Seahawks clinched a National Football League playoff berth and a chance at the Super Bowl, Bellevue Base Operator **John Boone** (shown at left with Base Chief **Ramona Dudley-Moore**) approached Base Superintendent **Ken Johnston** with the idea of allowing operators to wear jerseys and hats in support of the team. Operations Manager **Jim O'Rourke** green-lighted the scheme, allowing operators and first-line supervisors to wear Seahawks-branded apparel at work on “blue Fridays” (those before a Seahawks playoff game) and playoff game days. As these photos show, the idea caught on throughout the organization.



Transit operators of the month

December 2013

Atlantic Base: **Raymond Wilson**
Bellevue Base: **Randy Burke**
Central Base: **Eddie Yi**
Eastside Base: **Kenneth Newton**
North Base: **Dale Overby**
Ryerson Base: **Timothy Tyni**
South Base: **Robert Horton**

January 2014

Atlantic Base: **Chad Lopez**
Bellevue Base: **James Baugh**
Central Base: **Don Bielenberg**
East Base: **Grigoriy Brushchenko**
North Base: **Yuri Gimbiruk**
Ryerson Base: **Prashant Kumar**
South Base: **James Campion**



In Transit online

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available at www.kingcounty.gov/InTransit.



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We'll Get You There



SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

News briefs in and around the Transit Division

■ VanPool tops 2013 growth

goal—Rideshare Operations had a goal of growing its service by 60 new vanpools last year. They met that goal two months early. As of Oct. 31, they had 62 more active vanpool groups than at the start of the year, having averaged 20 vanpool starts and 14 van returns per month.



Mark McLaughlin

■ McLaughlin remembered

—On Nov. 29, Metro managers and ATU 587 members attended memorial services for **Mark McLaughlin** at both his gravesite and Metro's North Base

playfield. McLaughlin was murdered while driving his Route 359 bus across the Aurora Bridge 15 years ago. Union members also placed a wreath at the place where the bus went off the Aurora Bridge. The day after Thanksgiving has been named "Mark McLaughlin Day" in the ATU labor agreement in order to keep his memory alive. The North Base playfield was named in McLaughlin's honor last summer.

■ Charter signed for 10-year

downtown Seattle transit plan—Last October, executives at Metro, Sound Transit, Community Transit, and the Washington and Seattle departments of transportation committed to working together to support coordinated transit services and enhancements in downtown Seattle over the next decade. Agency leaders charged their staffs with developing recommendations for ways to ensure that major infrastructure construction projects will work with transit and maintain or enhance transit access to downtown Seattle.

■ Operation Happy Holidays—

From mid-September through mid-November, Metro Transit Police deputies joined other local law enforcement agencies in a special undercover operation to clean up drug dealing along Third Avenue in downtown Seattle and make the area safer and more pleasant during the holiday shopping season. Felony cases were developed against 40 drug dealers and suspected gang members, and 31 had been arrested and booked into King County Jail by early December.



Metro Transit Police bike officers identified suspects from undercover drug buys as part of a sweep to clean up narcotics trafficking in downtown Seattle.

■ BAT lanes open on Aurora—

New BAT (Business Access and Transit) lanes have been installed on Aurora Avenue N in preparation for the RapidRide E Line, which is due to launch in February. The new lanes, between N 115th Street and N 38th Street, add to existing BAT lanes between N 145th Street and N 192nd Street. More possible locations are under review by the Seattle Department of Transportation. These

lanes were installed before the E Line launch in order for us to measure bus timing through the area and test the transit signal priority system that will be used for the E Line—making Route 358 an early beneficiary of these improvements.



Route 358 benefitted from early implementation of improvements designed to speed RapidRide E Line service on Aurora Avenue N.]

■ **Pilot parking projects**—Metro received grants last year from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration to support "right-sized" parking projects and encourage developers to support dense, compact development that leads to growth in the number of people who get around without automobiles. Through a competitive bid process, Metro chose four organizations (Capitol Hill Housing, El Centro de la Raza, Hopelink, and Zipcar) to partner with us on pilot parking projects that will support the objectives of our strategic plan. In 2014, each of these organizations will be doing pilot parking projects at multifamily buildings in King County with the goal of promoting transit and other travel alternatives, affordable housing, and compact development.

Campbell retires after 31 years at Metro

Darwin Campbell started his career at Metro in 1983, when he was hired as the budget and financial officer of Metro's Marketing Division. He wore other hats—including customer relations chief and supervisor of vanpool operations—before becoming the supervisor of budget and technology in 1993.

In that post, he oversaw the Sales and Customer Services budget and the launch of ground-breaking customer-facing technology systems. He also spent time in Transit IT, supervising the systems support team. In 1996, he became manager of Sales and Customer Services, leading Metro's adoption of new, innovative ways of communicating with customers.

Campbell oversaw many technological milestones at Metro, including the creation of the first

transit system website in the U.S., our online trip planner, and online pass sales; installation of a computerized, moving-carousel system for handling and distributing bus timetables; purchase and deployment of Orca vending machines; and adoption of the automated system that tracks all customer comments that come in via telephone and email.

Campbell established a quality customer services culture at Metro and represented us at many transit industry conferences. He also served as a national board member of the Conference of Minority Transit Officials (1996 and 2001) and was a member of the Federal Transit Administrators safety and security task force after the 9/11 attacks.



Darwin Campbell

"It's been a great 31 years," Campbell said. "I've worked with some great teams that achieved many new and innovative things. I'm proud of the work performed by Sales and Customer Services staff over the years, and will continue to follow their successes as they move forward after I leave."

Security Sensitive



Look ahead to the incident report

If you drove to work this morning, was there a moment when you checked your cell phone, were busy eating, or got distracted by the radio and hit the "road turtles?" What if an accident had happened at that moment?

Or what about the last time you were sick, and rummaged through your medicine cabinet? I did that recently and found medicines that were just what I needed...but they weren't prescribed for me. When I finally tracked down some over-the-counter night-time cold medicine, it was, sadly, broad daylight.

When you find something that isn't yours, do you always turn it in?

Perhaps you wonder if the owner will ever come to claim it. But what if someone sees you find it, and then sees you not turn it in?

We aren't stupid, but do we sometimes do stupid things? You can answer for yourself, but my answer is a resounding "yes!" The fact is that in each of these situations, the incident report is nearly written as we consider (or don't consider) our options. Make the right choice, and the need for a report evaporates. Make the wrong choice, and the ink becomes permanent.

If you're easily distracted at the wheel, the Europeans and Australians have some great commercials on YouTube that will scare you straight. Taking meds that aren't yours, or that aren't suitable when you're operating more

than the TV remote, is probably a bad choice (remember Murphy's Law). And how amazing would it be to find something that was worth exactly what your integrity, job, or reputation is worth? If you handle the situation poorly, you may be exchanging one for the other.

Take a moment today to look ahead to the incident report—and stay secure.

— **Mark L. Norton**

Manager, Transit Security and
Emergency Management

*Send comments and ideas on
Metro security, emergency
management, and homeland
security to mark.norton@kingcounty.gov.*



ON THE MOVE

Transit Division retirements, promotions/job changes, new hires, and remembrances

Retirements

Operations

Corinne Farr, first-line supervisor (South Base) – December 31; 34 years

Henry Fichtner, transit operator (South Base) – December 31; 31 years

Eli Haggins, transit operator (South Base) – November 1; 23 years

Frank Neubert, transit operator (North Base) – January 1; 24 years

Linda Wells, training instructor (South Base) – February 1; 32 years

Transit Managers Office

Carol Dawson, business and finance officer II – December 1; 8+ years

Vehicle Maintenance

Lolita Co, transit utility service worker (Ryerson) – December 1; 23+ years

Jeannette Willis, administrative specialist III (North Base) – February 28; 22+ years

Promotions and Job Changes

Design and Construction

Mike Chargualaf to project control engineer IV from project control engineer III

General Managers Office

Vinh Tran to transit administrative support specialist II from transit administrative support specialist I

Operations

Laurie Carter to operations systems support coordinator from first-line supervisor (North Base dispatch/planner)

Tutti Compton to chief of service quality from Atlantic Base chief (cross training)

Tim Mack to Atlantic Base chief from chief of service quality (cross training finished)

Jason Oppie to training chief (Central/Atlantic/Ryerson Bases) from base chief (East Base)

Lynn Riley to training chief (Bellevue Base) from training chief (Central/Atlantic/Ryerson Bases)

Service Development

Ashley (DeForest) Arai to acting transportation planner III (Service Planning) from transportation planner II (6-month backfill for **Jana Demas**)

Dale Cummings to transportation planner IV from transportation planner III

Vehicle Maintenance

Sheri Keelan to acting data administrator from technical information processing specialist

Cindy Sattler to functional analyst IV from data administrator

Karl Urwiler to acting transit parts specialist from purchasing specialist

New Hires

Power and Facilities

Michelle Anderson, administrative specialist III (Power Distribution) – December 2

Rail

Ian Bennett, transit chief (Railway, Signage and Facilities); rehire – November 25

Kirk Friermuth, rail electrical worker (Link); rehire – December 9

Gina Goss, rail service worker (Link) – December 9

Sales and Customer Services

Marianne Ward, transit pass sales representative (Customer Services); rehire – December 2

Service Development

Martin Minkoff, supervisor (Service Planning) – September 23

Brian Van Abbema, undergrad intern II (Speed and Reliability) – December 3

Vehicle Maintenance

Anthony Cazenave, equipment service worker (TLT) – December 2

Louise Haworth, utility service worker – December 2

Jason Hogg, equipment service worker (TLT) – November 4; mechanic (TLT) – December 7

Brian Paez, equipment service worker (TLT) – December 2

Cheryl Woodruff, technical information processing specialist III (TLT) – November 4

In Our Thoughts

Andy Gilmore, mechanic (retired) passed away November 9

George Voller, mechanic (South Base) passed away November 16